



Trajectories of Japanese and South Korean Environmental Aid A Comparative Historical Analysis

Tonami, Aki; Müller, Anders Riel

Published in:
Journal of Environment & Development

DOI:
[10.1177/1070496513510518](https://doi.org/10.1177/1070496513510518)

Publication date:
2014

Citation for published version (APA):
Tonami, A., & Müller, A. R. (2014). Trajectories of Japanese and South Korean Environmental Aid: A Comparative Historical Analysis. *Journal of Environment & Development*, 23(2), 191-219.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1070496513510518>

Trajectories of Japanese and South Korean Environmental Aid: A Comparative Historical Analysis

Journal of Environment & Development

2014, Vol. 23(2) 191–219

© The Author(s) 2013

Reprints and permissions:

sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI: 10.1177/1070496513510518

jed.sagepub.com



Aki Tonami¹ and Anders Riel Müller^{2,3}

Abstract

Environmental aid has become a major component of development aid. We analyzed the contingent characters of environmental aid of Japan and South Korea using the definition of Williams, which regards aid policy as donor driven and autobiographical of the donor agencies and societies from which they sprang. Both Japan and South Korea consider environmental aid as an important tool of their diplomacy. A combination of a moral obligation and domestic, international, political, and economic interests underpin both countries' environmental aid policy. Seen from the stated policies and practices, both countries use accounts of their past as once-developing countries trying to catch up in their aid narrative. In this manner, the environmental aid of Japan and South Korea is *autobiographic*, reflecting their interpretation of their own development history and position in global politics.

Keywords

environmental aid, East Asia, Japan, South Korea, policy analysis, aid as autobiography

¹Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark

²Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen, Denmark

³Department of Society and Globalisation, Roskilde University, Roskilde, Denmark

Corresponding Author:

Aki Tonami, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, University of Copenhagen, Oester Farimagsgade 5, Copenhagen K 1353, Denmark.

Email: aki.tonami@nias.ku.dk

Introduction

Environmental aid has become a major component of foreign aid as environmental degradation and climate change have emerged as global concerns. Japan contends it has committed itself to the protection of the global environment since the 1990s, and environmental aid has been an important part of that effort. South Korea has recently become an emerging actor in the development aid community. South Korea, said to be following in the footsteps of Japan in designing and managing its aid (Kang & Park, 2011), has also started to market its green diplomacy through programs such as the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) and the East Asia Climate Partnership (EACP). Both Japanese and South Korean aid have been criticized for being driven by their economic interests rather than altruism or recipient needs and for focusing too strongly on infrastructure projects (Alesina & Dollar, 2000; Hirata, 2002; Kalinowski & Cho, 2012; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee [OECD-DAC], 2008; Watson, 2011).

A considerable amount of literature has been published on official development assistance (ODA) effectiveness. In an attempt to better understand the mechanism of aid and to improve its impact, a number of studies have analyzed the reason why donors give aid and why it does not work (Dudley & Montmarquette, 1976; Maizels & Nissanke, 1984; Lumsaine, 1993; Easterly, 2006; Zimmerman, 2007). It is also argued that not only must aid be effective, but recipient countries ought also to have greater ownership and influence on aid policy (Pearson, 1989; Cassen, 1994; Bourguignon & Sundberg, 2007; Doucouliagos & Paldam, 2009). As a consequence, donor countries and recipient countries alike agreed that aid should be more effective by adhering to five principles: ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results, and mutual accountability (OECD, 2008; OECD-DAC, 2011). Donor interest versus altruism is another prominent discussion in aid policy debates (Lundborg, 1998; Pedersen, 2001; Berthélemy, 2006).

Against this background, we aim to analyze and compare Japanese and South Korean environmental aid to shed light on the influence that aid from both countries can bring to the political dynamics of environmental aid. In our analysis, the starting point is the approach proposed by Williams (2002), which regards aid policy as *autobiographic* of donor countries. In other words, aid policy is donor driven and contingent upon the donor country's self-image rather than what recipient countries need. Using the autobiography approach proposed by Williams, we examine various policies, government documents, and the information obtained through interviews, and highlight five areas of Japanese and South Korean environmental aid: the bureaucratic and institutional imperatives, the internal procedures and processes, the stated policies, the practices and particular attitudes that underlie them, and the broader impulses

behind aid. In other words, this analysis seeks to understand Japanese and South Korean environmental aid through a comparative analysis that draws on historic, cultural, and economic indicators that were influential in determining the direction of environmental aid rather than to evaluate them. Based on this analysis, it is argued that both Japan and South Korea have promoted experience-based development in their environmental aid. This has set them apart from Western donors and provides a different kind of expert role, one based on its own experience, with claims to near-universal applicability.

Aid as Autobiography

According to the OECD-DAC, which is an influential international forum for selected OECD member states to discuss aid-related issues, ODA is the official and concessional “resource flows to developing countries” from donor countries (OECD-DAC, 2013a).¹ When considering the allocation of aid, donors have to decide (a) types of aid (grants, low interest, concessional loans for project, or budget support), (b) the amount, (c) an agent to deliver the aid and to manage the projects (national donor agencies or multilateral organizations such as the World Bank or the United Nations), (d) recipient countries, and (e) public or private institutions within recipient countries to receive aid (Hicks, Parks, Roberts, & Tierney, 2008). One of the best-known targets in aid is a proposal to make ODA contributions equivalent to 0.7% of donor countries’ gross national income (ODA/GNI target; OECD, 2013a). In addition, since its creation in 1961, the DAC has recommended to *untie* aid because *tying* aid, which is to offer aid on the condition that it be used to procure goods or services from a specific country or region, contributes to lowering the aid effectiveness (OECD-DAC, 2013c). The DAC has adopted five criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability) in evaluating aid since the 1990s (OECD, 1991).

These proposals for aid effectiveness explicitly or implicitly express normative concerns; they seek to say something about what ought to be, and be done. From a policy perspective, these proposals are of course highly relevant; however, in this article, we attempt to explore how aid policies in the case of Japanese and South Korean environmental aid are guided by reflections of trends in the countries’ own policy environment. As previously mentioned, both countries have been criticized for pursuing economic and political self-interest through their aid. The question we raise here, however, is whether political and economic self-interest necessarily stands in opposition to, for example, humanitarian objectives. Williams (2002) asks whether it is possible to claim that the work of aid agencies may not be grounded in any well-established claim about the effectiveness of their work at all but rather about the desirability of particular policies or aid projects. A proposal that aid often is autobiographical of the donor rather than a well-thought assessment of the needs of the recipient opens opportunities that may provide new insights into aid policy formulation

and practices. Whether humanitarian impulse, security, and political or economic concerns actually guide aid is no longer in opposition to each other but rather a reflection of the donor's multiple concerns. An autobiographical approach moves away from a normative analysis of what aid ought to do. It also moves the focus of aid effectiveness from deficiencies of recipients, such as poor governance and corruption, to an analysis of the aid donor, and how particular values and institutional imperatives are embedded in the donor's aid policy. Our approach to Japanese and South Korean aid thus seeks to identify the historically, culturally, and economically contingent character of the environmental aid of both countries.

According to Williams (2002), the idea that aid is donor driven and autobiographical of a donor can be explored in five areas: first, "in terms of the bureaucratic and institutional imperatives facing aid agencies," in other words, what are the bureaucratic and institutional imperatives or "hard humanitarian interests" that aid agencies face? (p. 159). These hard interests include the ability to earn money, spend money, and avoid criticism that may impede their ability to raise further funds. The second question asks about "the internal procedures and processes of the agencies (Williams 2002, p. 159)." Aid agencies tend to adopt similar programming systems as those preferred by those in control of fund allocation. Williams highlights the proliferation of an evaluation and auditing culture that may affect the aid agency's operations. Evaluation and auditing procedures may operate as control systems that define and confine the aid agency's operational processes. Third, the idea can be explored "in terms of the stated policies of the agencies": The agency's policies may not be a learning from experience approach, but driven by changes in broader political concerns in donor countries (Williams, 2002, p. 159). Fourth, the approach inquires about the "terms of the practices of aid agencies"; Williams identifies the expert culture of aid agencies and professionals that dictates that they know best, or at least they know best how to identify what the recipient needs (2002, p. 159). This expert knowledge justifies the existence of the aid agency and programs. Finally, Williams proposes as a fifth area of inquiry, "the broader impulses in donor countries that drive aid and humanitarian activity" (2002, p. 159). This includes a more fundamental exploration regarding what drives our concern for helping the poor. In our analysis, we refer to these five areas as follows: the bureaucratic and institutional imperatives, the internal procedures and processes, the stated policies, the practices and particular attitude that underlie them, and the broader impulse behind aid.

With this framework in mind, our assumption is that Japanese and South Korean aid is contingent upon changing balances of economic interest, foreign relations, and humanitarian concerns. These may be applied simultaneously with certain biases, they may change over time, and they may change according to recipient countries. Meanwhile, we acknowledge limitations to applying the Williams's (2002) approach. For instance, autobiographical analysis does little

to understand the outcomes of environmental aid policies or how these policies are negotiated and renegotiated in specific projects, where a variety of actors such as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and recipient country governments may influence actual implementation. Although we accept these limitations, an autobiographical approach is useful to delve deeper into the processes of environmental aid policy formulation as influenced by the donor's stories about themselves.

Background on Japanese Aid

In 2012, Japan was the fifth largest aid donor, providing 10.49 billion USD in ODA (OECD, 2013b). Japan is so far the only major aid donor not located in Western Europe or North America. In the 1980s and 1990s, Japan was the first or second largest aid donor among DAC donor countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MoFA], 2013), but due to the domestic economic downturn from the beginning of the 1990s, financial aid has been on a downward trend since 1995 (OECD, 2013b; Figure 1).² Japan has a strong preference for bilateral aid, accounting for 81% of its aid in 2012. Japanese aid consists of loans (52% of Japan's gross bilateral ODA in 2012), technical cooperation (19%), and grants (10%; MoFA, 2012a). In the same year, Japanese ODA as percent of GNI was 0.17% (OECD, 2013b). Japanese aid can be characterized in many ways: Japanese aid has always demanded fewer conditionalities, its financial terms have been harder, and it has focused much more on the hardware side of aid, such as building infrastructure, rather than software, such as governance and institutional change. In addition, Japan has been more supportive of a leading role for the state in development (Lancaster, 2010).

Although aid to other regions such as Africa has increased in recent years, Japan has traditionally focused its aid on Asia, particularly East Asia (OECD, 2010). This is related to the fact that Japanese aid started in 1954 primarily as reparations to 13 Asian countries after World War II (Sato, 2013). When the DAC was established at the OECD in 1960, Japan joined the DAC before joining the OECD. In 1961, the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (later becoming the Japan Bank of International Cooperation [JBIC]) was established to take care of development aid finance due to pressures from the business sector and politicians (JBIC, 2003). In 1962, the Overseas Technical Cooperation Agency (later becoming the Japan International Cooperation Agency [JICA]), which handled technical assistance, was established (MoFA, 2002). Japan later joined the OECD in 1965 but remained a relatively small donor until much later (Sato, 2013).

From the mid-1970s, mainly due to external pressures, the amount of Japanese aid began to increase dramatically (Potter, 2012). From 1975, several events affecting Japan's resource security also convinced Japan to use aid for diplomatic purposes (Sato, 2013). Meanwhile, the Japanese government

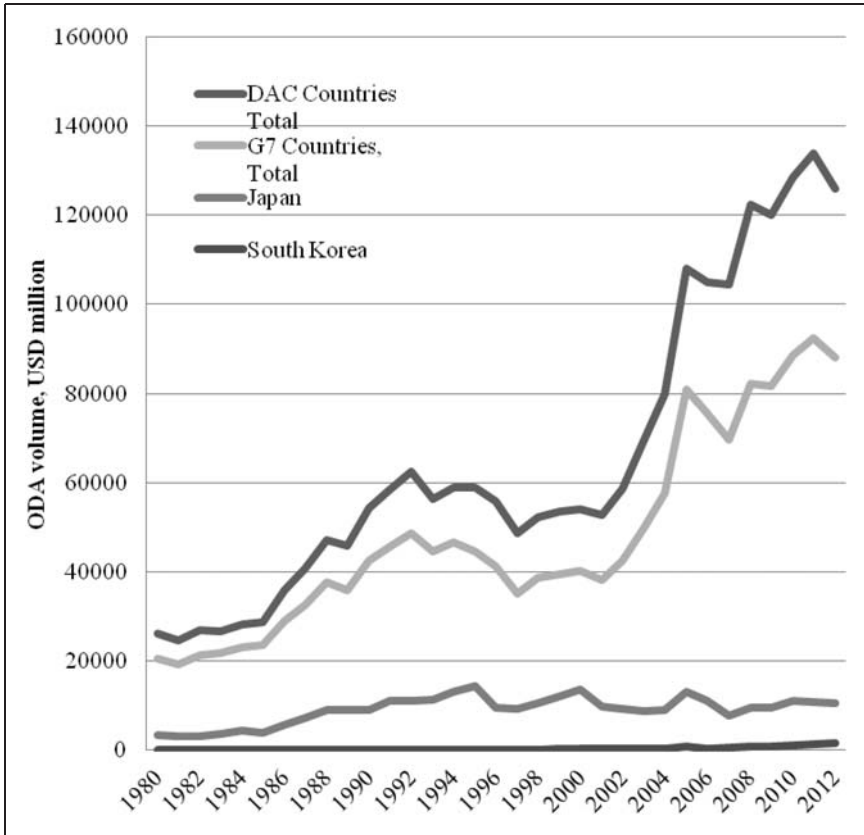


Figure 1. ODA trend 1980–2012.

Source: OECD (2013b).

announced that it would untie aid in 1978, which was considered by other Western governments as a major step to align Japanese aid with DAC standards (Lancaster, 2010). Japan made an official announcement to make aid more consistent with DAC norms in 1981, and the effort to untie its aid continued during the 1980s. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Japan enjoyed its position as the first or second largest aid donor among DAC donor countries (MoFA, 2013).

Economic stagnation gradually changed Japan's aid from 1991. After its peak in 1995, financial aid has been on a downward trend (OECD, 2013b). On the other hand, related to a relative decline in power of the government and business due to economic problems, Japanese NGOs started to exert more influence over development aid policy during the 1990s (Sunaga, 2004). Also starting in the 1990s, the institutional aspect of Japanese aid became much more coordinated

and organized. The first ODA charter was enacted in 1992, which stated four philosophical underpinnings: (a) the imperative of humanitarian considerations, (b) recognition of the interdependent relationships among member nations of the international community, (c) the necessity for conserving the environment, and (d) the necessity for supporting the *self-help efforts* of developing countries (MoFA, 1997).

In 1999, the Japanese government announced for the first time that it intended to improve the quality of overseas assistance rather than its quantity, which was a dramatic change of direction in the country's aid policy (MoFA, 2003). In 2003, the ODA Charter was revised and the government declared that it would adopt the concept of *human security*.³ In its charter, Japan stated that the basic policies of its ODA are (a) supporting self-help efforts of developing countries, (b) perspective of human security, (c) assurance of fairness, (d) utilization of Japan's experience and expertise, and (e) partnership and collaboration with the international community (MoFA, 2003). These new priorities reflected the ongoing discussions on development aid at the time; Japanese tax-payers believed that ODA should be beneficial not only for recipient countries but also for Japan in the midst of a prolonged recession and demanded much more visible effects of their aid abroad.

In 2008, JBIC and JICA merged and became a new JICA, changing the role and resources of related ministries and JICA itself. Nonetheless, the Japanese development aid system still involves more than 13 ministries and agencies, though the system is coordinated around a central hub: the International Cooperation Bureau of the MoFA. MoFA is given the central coordinating role by the ODA Charter, and around two thirds of Japanese ODA is managed through MoFA and the new JICA. JICA is an independent administrative agency and is held accountable by MoFA through a multiyear performance plan. JICA is responsible for technical cooperation, concessional loans, and aid grants. In addition to MoFA, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) is responsible for Japan's contributions to the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and regional development banks. JICA loans also have to be approved by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). MoFA, MoF, and METI are responsible for around 92% of Japanese official assistance (OECD, 2010).

Japanese Environmental Aid

Japan's environmental aid has been increasing at a steady pace, reaching 8.6 billion USD in 2010 (MoFA, 2012a; Figure 2). Japan has given environmental aid⁴ since the 1980s, but the government started to give greater emphasis to environmental issues around the start of the 1990s, particularly after its participation in the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 (Kagawa-Fox, 2012). Around this period, solving environmental problems came to be highlighted by a wide range of actors in Japan as one of the key ways in which Japan could contribute

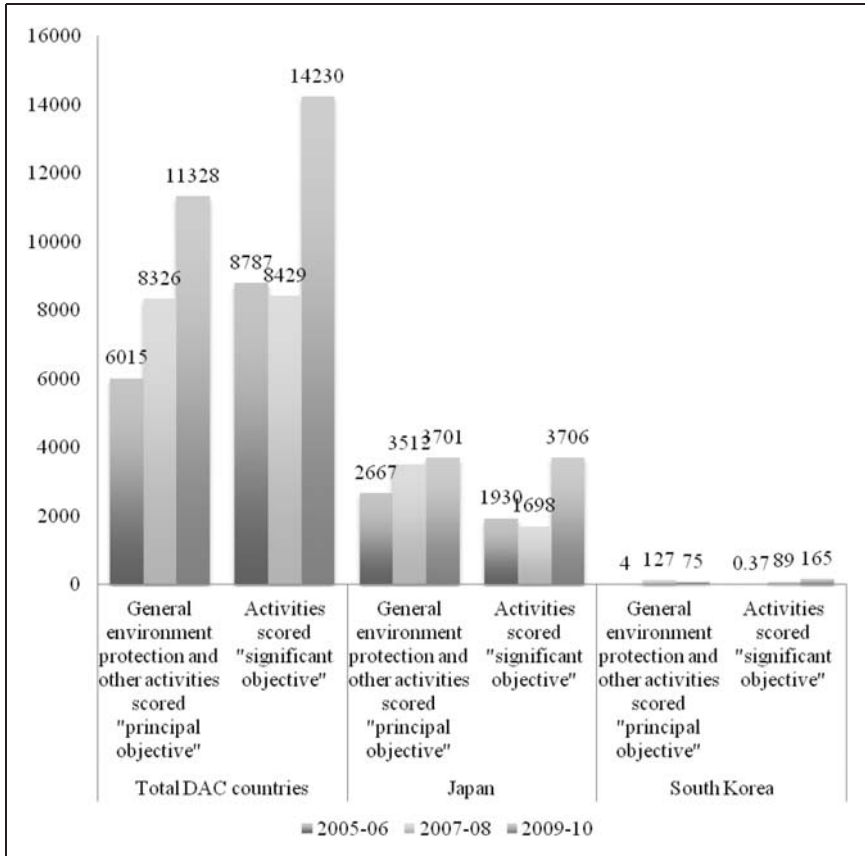


Figure 2. Environmental aid (USD million).

Source. OECD (2012a).

to the international society. In the 1990s and 2000s, environmental aid became a central component of Japanese efforts in the field of human security (Hall, 2010).

It is believed that Japan bases its environmental aid on its experience of the environmental problems that brought serious pollution diseases with Japan's rapid economic development in the 1950s to 1970s (Gomez, 2008). Combined with Japan's relative preference for giving aid to infrastructure projects, Japanese environmental aid has also been concentrated around building facilities for water and sewage, energy, and transportation, using Japan's advanced technology on environment conservation. In addition, Japan has advocated the importance of building human capacity to cope with environmental problems; in other words, capacity development for environmental management. This preference manifests itself as a support for training programs for government officers

of recipient countries (Mori, 2009). As previously mentioned, the Japanese development aid system involves more than 13 ministries and agencies, but the system is coordinated around MoFA, and MoFA and JICA are the main actors for the implementation of environmental aid while the Ministry of Environment has a relatively small budget for international environmental cooperation as well.

According to Hall (2010), the rise of environmental aid in overall Japanese aid can be explained by the following three factors: (a) the meeting of a new set of transnational norms and networks and a remarkable convergence of interests at the domestic level; (b) substantial leeway for Japanese actors to frame the nature of the contribution that Japan could make to the environment at the global level, because those new norms that helped make these projects were very vague; and (c) dominant frame that emerged drew on existing narratives of Japan's own earlier pollution crisis, and of the nature of the Japanese political economy, to help shape the direction that environmental aid took.

Analysis: Japanese Environmental Aid

The Bureaucratic and Institutional Imperatives

First, according to Williams (2002), aid is autobiographical of a donor country in terms of the bureaucratic and institutional imperatives facing aid agencies; they are hard interests rather than soft interests that are usually stated in the agencies' aims (p. 159). Of such hard interests, at least three are described as follows: (a) the necessity to obtain money, (b) the pressure to spend money, and (c) the desire to avoid or be insulated from criticism. In the Japanese budgetary system, a competition among ministries (bureaucrats) to secure budget allocation to their own ministry or department is fierce (Kadono & Takizawa, 2008), accelerated by its vertically fragmented and pluralistic decision-making system in bureaucracy. Naturally the necessity to obtain money is high for aid-related agencies, even at least to maintain the level of budget allocation at the status quo. An increase in the aid budget is generally welcomed among related officials, both in terms of their capacity to provide aid to recipient countries and to secure their influence inside the ministry and beyond.⁵ Based on the Japanese Constitution Article No. 86, which states that "the Cabinet shall prepare and submit to the Diet for its consideration and decision a budget for each fiscal year," the Japanese budgetary system runs on a singular-year basis. This, combined with the fierce budgetary competitions, adds a strong pressure to aid-related agencies to spend the money they have obtained. JICA has been given an exception for appropriate projects that run over multiple fiscal years since 2008. This is because it has widely criticized the single-year budget system in that it often did not fit the demand of development aid projects that require multiple years of commitment.

Japanese aid agencies are not an exception in that they want to avoid or insulate themselves from criticism. In 1991, Japan became the biggest bilateral aid donor; in the same year, however, an OCED report heavily criticized Japanese aid for being tied to Japanese businesses (Jempa, 1991). In reaction to this criticism, Japanese aid agencies proceeded to further untie Japanese aid. This eventually aroused domestic criticism that aid did not circulate benefits to Japanese business or society; this criticism led to a consensus that Japanese aid to developing countries should bring economic benefits not only to the recipient but also to Japanese taxpayers if it is to fulfill accountability.⁶ The Revised ODA Charter (2003) reflects this criticism well; in its introduction it states that

In line with the spirit of the Japanese Constitution, Japan will vigorously address these new challenges to fulfill its responsibilities commensurate with its national strength and its standing in the international community. In this regard, it is important to have public support for ODA. It is essential to effectively implement ODA, fully taking into account the domestic economic and fiscal situation as well as the views of the Japanese people.

Against this background, the Government of Japan has revised the ODA Charter, with the aim of enhancing the strategic value, flexibility, transparency, and efficiency of ODA. The revision also has the aim of encouraging wide public participation and of deepening the understanding of Japan's ODA policies both within Japan and abroad.

The Internal Procedures and Processes

Japanese aid agencies have tended to adopt programming systems similar to those that are used in other government agencies. For instance, Japanese aid has experienced an upsurge in evaluation and audit requirements in the past decade. In 2001, JICA released its first *Guide to Project Evaluation* (JICA, 2004). This coincided with the Japanese government's enactment of the Government Policy Evaluations Act (Act No. 86 of June 29, 2001). The act aimed to promote the implementation of policy evaluation in the planning and development of policy among the Japanese administrative bodies, but the influence of internal procedures and processes on aid policy was also visible prior to this. The Basic Environmental Law of Japan (1993), which merged the Environmental Pollution Prevention Act (1967) and the Nature Conservation Act (1972), was enacted when environmental aid started to increase around the start of 1990s. In 1994, the framework for environmental cooperation was concluded between Japan and China, the largest recipient of Japanese environmental aid since then. Using internal procedures for aid projects can create frustration between the

donor and recipient. Wajjwalku and Tasarika (2008) described such frustration from the Japanese aid agency side and Thai officials, who were the recipients of Japanese environmental aid. During the Reforestation and Extension Project in the northeast of Thailand (the REX Project), the relations of both sides were not smooth to begin with, and the culture gap and the language barrier added to the problem. Budget management was another aspect that frustrated cooperation, mainly because of the failure of the Thai government to meet its financial obligations requested by the Japanese aid agency.

The Stated Policies

The stated policies of aid agencies often reflect changing political concerns among donor state and society. In the Japanese case, it is not just a reflection but also an embodiment of the political concerns of the Japanese government and society. As a developmental state, where an interventionist government guides and supports socioeconomic development through industrial growth in a capitalist environment (Johnson, 1982), development aid has been one of two central tools of Japan's economic diplomacy, the other one being trade and investment. The Japanese government and private sector have made cooperative efforts to sell technologies where Japanese businesses have a strong competitive advantage (Okano-Haijmans, 2012). The Japanese government considers it almost as its mission to introduce Japanese environmental technology to developing countries⁷ as part of environmental aid because of its own experience with environmental problems that brought serious pollution problems in the wake of rapid economic development in the 1950s to 1970s (Gomez, 2008; Hall, 2010). The Ministry of Environment (2011) explains this logic as follows:

During its period of high economic growth, Japan experienced heavy industrial pollution and other environmental problems. Through all-out efforts by the national and local governments, business corporations, and citizens' groups, pollution has abated dramatically. In addition, the country has achieved economic growth while improving efficiency in use of resources and energy. Today, Japan is working on waste disposal and other pollution issues related to everyday living, global warming and conservation of nature. Backed by experiences and technologies developed through its own development, Japan is cooperating with countries around the world, particularly developing countries in protection of the environment.

As previously mentioned, after Japanese aid agencies were criticized that aid did not benefit the Japanese tax payers at all, it became important to make Japanese aid more visible to both Japanese tax payers and the citizens of

recipient countries (D. Potter, 1994). The Japanese ODA Charter, first enacted in 1992 and modified in 2003, repeatedly emphasizes the benefit it will bring to Japan: "Such efforts will in turn benefit Japan itself in a number of ways, including by promoting friendly relations and people-to-people exchanges with other countries, and by strengthening Japan's standing in the international arena." (MoFA, 2003)

The Practices and Particular Attitude That Underlie Them

Aid activity is often shaped by a set of attitudes toward people and societies of developing countries. As previously mentioned, the Japanese ODA charter describes the basic policies of Japanese aid: supporting self-help efforts of developing countries, a perspective of human security, assurance of fairness, utilization of Japan's experience and expertise, and partnership and collaboration with the international community. Japan places central importance on support for the self-help efforts of developing countries. This belief in self-help efforts comes from the interpretation of Japan's postwar development experience, where the country achieved rapid economic growth through a combination of its own efforts and development aid (Sawamura, 2004). Rix (1993) has argued that the connection between Japanese development aid philosophy and Japan's historical and cultural characteristics goes further back to its experience in the 19th century:

Japan is quick to remind others of its own rapid modernisation process from the Meiji period (1868–1912) onwards, based on deliberate adaptation and learning from the West, strong internal leadership and control, conscious policies to promote education and national awareness, and imperial expansion to support domestic economic growth. It was an economically successful formula, and as a result the principle of self-reliance among recipients has been entrenched in Japan's current aid policies. (pp. 15, 16)

The strong economic growth achieved by East Asian countries, which have been the main recipients of Japanese aid, strengthened Japan's belief in self-help. On the other hand, this notion of self-help is criticized for putting too much faith in a country's own ability to make efforts for development and weakens the sense of charity toward the less fortunate (Rix, 1993). In addition, many countries lack the administrative capacity necessary to act on their own initiatives (in other words, self-help), and this makes Japan's development aid policy less successful in some cases (Sawamura, 2004). In environmental aid, administrative capacity is of particular importance, as environmental management is considered most effective if done at a local administrative level, based on the subsidiarity principle (Tonami & Mori, 2007).

The Broader Impulse Behind Aid

Lastly, aid is autobiographical in terms of where the broader impulse for a donor country to engage in development comes from. The Japanese ODA Charter declares the objectives of Japan's ODA: "to contribute to the peace and development of the international community, and thereby to help ensure Japan's own security and prosperity." Williams (2002) criticized foreign aid for being an expression of the particular moral outlook of Western societies, and Japan does not hesitate to clearly express that Japan's development aid, including environmental aid, is (or should be) related to promoting Japan's interests, such as security and trade and investment promotion. In doing so, Japan developed the philosophy of self-help efforts based on its own development experience, which is believed to function in recipient countries. Japanese aid, for these reasons, can be said to be an autobiographic interpretation of Japanese economic development history.

Background on South Korean Aid

In 2011, South Korean ODA amounted to 1.3 billion USD (OECD, 2013b), the 17th among the DAC member countries (OECD, 2013b). The South Korean aid budget has increased steadily from 1990 until today, with a slump following the 1997 financial crisis (Korea International Cooperation Agency [KOICA], 2011a; OECD, 2013b). Like Japan, South Korea has a strong preference for bilateral aid, accounting for 70% in 2011, of which grants accounted for 57.5% while loans accounted for the remaining 42.5% (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade [MOFAT], 2012; OECD, 2013c). The ODA budget for 2011 makes South Korea a lower middle donor among OECD-DAC member countries, but its ODA/GNI ratio stands at 0.12% in 2011 (OECD, 2012b), which is significantly lower than the 0.31% DAC average (Smart, 2011). Historically, aid projects were characterized by many smaller projects with a wide geographical spread and covering a broad range of sectors primarily to spread its diplomatic influence as broadly as possible in its competition with North Korean aid diplomacy. Similar to Japanese ODA, South Korean ODA has always had a strong focus on Asia. This can be related to three major factors: (a) geographical proximity; (b) greater perceived compatibility between the South Korean development experience and social, economic, political, and cultural proximity; and (c) closer economic and political ties to Asian developing countries. South Korea has recently begun to restructure aid to focus on a fewer number of priority countries mainly in Asia and Africa to accommodate OECD-DAC recommendations (KOICA, 2011b).

South Korean ODA goes back to the early 1960s when the government began to invite trainees from other developing countries to Korea. By the 1980s as South Korea's economic power increased, its aid began to focus on economic

development to strengthen economic ties and to share its own experience with other developing countries (KOICA, 2011a). In 1987, the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (ECDF) was established to provide concessional loans under the Ministry of Strategy and Finance (MOSF). In 1991, the KOICA was founded to administer grant aid under MOFAT. By 1995, South Korea was removed from the World Bank lending list, and in 1996, the country joined the OECD and became a net donor of ODA (Smart, 2011; KOICA, 2012b). In 2007, the government began to prepare for entrance into the OECD-DAC, joining the group in 2010 as the first so-called Third World country. In January 2010, the government passed the Framework Act on International Development Cooperation (FAIDC), the first comprehensive and overarching legislation on ODA to address ODA inefficiencies and fragmentation (KOICA, 2011a).

South Korean Environmental Aid

This article limits its analysis to environmental aid since the founding of KOICA in 1991, acknowledging that modest amounts of environmental aid was provided before this date and that ECDF loans go further back to 1987. In addition, we focus primarily on environmental aid from the South Korean government falling under the jurisdiction of either the KOICA or the Korean Economic Development Fund (ECDF).⁸ Historically, there has been no overarching management of the two programs, and as previously mentioned, the programs fall under the jurisdiction of two different ministries. The two institutions often consult with each other but lack coordination (OECD-DAC, 2008). Today, approximately 80% of South Korean ODA is administered by KOICA and ECDF. The remaining 20% is managed independently by 30 ministries, central government organizations, and local municipalities (ODA Watch, 2012).

From the inception of KOICA in 1991, environmental aid has increased from a few hundred thousand USD per year to 135 million USD in 2010 (KOICA, 2011a, 2011b). Although there has been a continuing upward trend in aid allocated to environmental issues during the years where English language information is available, a major increase occurred around 2004 (a year for which data were unavailable at the time of writing). Environmental grant aid stood at 780,000 USD in 2003 rising to more than 27 million USD in 2005 and more than 130 million USD in 2010 or 29.9% of the total budget allocated to KOICA (2004, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011b). The increase in grant aid for environmental projects has been followed by increases in concessional loans as well, but it is difficult to assess exactly to what extent because concessional loans for environmental projects are not reported separately in the annual reports from the ECDF (2008, 2009, 2011). By reading through major loan financing projects, it can be assessed that an increasing number of loans are given to projects related to renewable energy and climate change (ECDF, 2011).

Early environmental aid was relatively scattered and small scale. Projects were selected on the basis of South Korean comparative advantage of expertise from its own development history and on the basis of regional environmental concerns that directly affected South Korea. Reforestation and forest management activities in China and Mongolia have been long-term areas of activity because of desertification in northern China and Mongolia causing dust storms over the Korean peninsula in the spring season, with significant implications for public health and agriculture in South Korea (KOICA, 2002, 2003). Research on seed selection and plant nurseries for reforestation efforts in Indonesian rain forests has also received long-term attention (KOICA, 2006). South Koreans built significant expertise in reforestation in the decades following the Korean War, where most forests were cleared either for firewood or through bombing raids. Remaining aid covered a wide range of areas, but most funds were used for training and education of government officials from developing countries, and supporting the overseas volunteer corps. By the early 2000s, environmental aid received increasing attention, and South Korean expertise in areas such as waste management, water management, and industrial pollution prevention became more significant components in development activities overseas, however, with a continued emphasis on Asia (KOICA, 2011b). The increase in environmental aid coincided with domestic ambitions to improve South Korea's global standing that would reflect South Korea's economic wealth under then-President Roh Moo-Hyun (Kalinowski & Cho, 2012). During his presidency, environmental aid increased significantly but remained relatively low in terms of share of total aid allocation, reaching 15% of total aid in 2007, the final year of Roh Moo-Hyun's term.

The biggest surge in environmental aid and loans can be traced to the government led by Lee Myung-Bak, who came to power in late 2007 promising to revive economic growth, but his presidency was hit early and hard by the global economic recession. In August 2008, President Lee announced his new *Low Carbon, Green Growth* vision⁹ for South Korea's economic future as a way to get the economy back on track. The following year, the government introduced the National Strategy for Green Growth, the first 5-year national economic development plan since 1996 (Korea Economic Institute, 2011). The Green New Deal allocated 38.1 billion USD over 4 years to stimulate the domestic economy by fostering new green growth engines such as renewable energy, green building, and low-carbon vehicles (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2010). At the same time, President Lee also attempted new strategies for establishing South Korea as a truly global player with clout (Watson, 2011; Kalinowski & Cho, 2012). The Global Korea marketing initiative was announced on January 22, 2009, almost simultaneously with the Green New Deal. The Low Carbon Green Growth paradigm became a defining component of Global Korea activities. One pillar in President Lee's 10-point strategy for establishing South Korea as a global brand was an increase of ODA

(Watson, 2011). South Korea aims to increase its ODA budget to 0.25% of GNI by 2015 and to increase Green ODA to 30% of the total aid budget by 2020 (KOICA, 2011b). The most significant initiative under Green ODA so far is the EACP proposed by the president at the 2008 G8 summit in Toyako, Japan. South Korea committed 200 million dollars to EACP between 2008 and 2012 (KOICA, 2011b). The EACP is managed by KOICA and is the single most significant boost to the environmental ODA budgets (KOICA, 2011b).

South Korea's Green Growth strategy also extends into environmental aid through the establishment of the GGGI. The GGGI was established in June 2010 at the order of President Lee to share the green growth experience of South Korea with developing countries and diffuse Green Growth as a new model for economic development (Global Green Growth Institute, 2012). The president and the South Korean diplomatic apparatus have been actively involved in building partnerships with strong environmental credentials that can legitimize GGGI as an influential international organization, most notably through recruitment of countries such as Denmark, Norway, and Qatar, as well as notable academic climate change celebrities such as Jeffrey D. Sachs and Sir Nicholas Stern.

Analysis: Korean Environmental Aid

The Bureaucratic and Institutional Imperatives

In the South Korean administration, aid budget allocation is spread among a plethora of ministries, agencies, and local governments, creating fierce inter-institutional competition each year. Despite official commitment to improve overall coordination through the Committee of International Development Cooperation in 2010, further fragmentation has occurred (ODA Watch, 2012). South Korean government bureaucracies are hierarchically ordered, which means certain ministries have much better leverage in accessing aid funds. For example, ECDF is under the jurisdiction of the MoF, historically the most powerful ministry, while KOICA is under MOFAT. Therefore, one way that hard humanitarian interests guide South Korean ODA is through competition over aid allocations in a hierarchical structure of favored or less favored ministries, agencies, and local governments. Funding allocations indicate governmental hierarchy; therefore, funding completion is a competition for recognition, influence, and maintenance of the interinstitutional government hierarchy.¹⁰

Sheltering the government from external criticism that may reduce South Korea's international standing is of concern, leading to some changes in South Korean aid policy, especially since the entry into the DAC. South Korea is keenly aware of its international position as a wealthy but politically weak country. Its international standing depends much on building a reputation as a balancing middle power. South Korea uses multiple strategies to

accommodate and sometimes deflect criticism. For example, the government has committed itself to untying 100% of its aid by 2015 (KOICA, 2011b). There is visible progress; however, in 2010, 64% of aid remained tied, which is far from the target the government has set. South Korea deflects criticism also by emphasizing its early stage of ODA experience, accommodating some structural changes to aid policies, while stressing South Korea's unique position as an aid recipient turned donor. The latter argument is used to defend a particular South Korean approach to development. Insulation from domestic criticism is done in various ways. The government has actively promoted ODA to the public through media campaigns to emphasize the importance of ODA for South Korea's international reputation and economic interest and to share the South Korean miracle with the less fortunate countries of the world. The most significant domestic criticism comes from civil society groups such as ODA Watch, which has been repeatedly denied access to detailed data on the ODA budget on grounds of confidentiality and other nondisclosure of information (ODA Watch, 2012).¹¹ As such, the government is using various strategies to accommodate and deflect criticism both domestically and abroad.

The Internal Procedures and Processes

KOICA, the main South Korean agency in charge of grant aid, set up internal evaluation principles and guidelines in 1996 and later revised to align with OECD-DAC recommendations (KOICA, 2011a). Projects are evaluated based on five standards: appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, influence, and sustainability. In 2006, KOICA expanded evaluation procedures to include policy, strategy, sectors, and topics. The organization also adopted a rating system. The evaluation guidelines were completely revised as part of the preparation of entry into the OECD-DAC, and at the time of this writing, a unified evaluation process was underway to further streamline evaluation and auditing of ODA. However, critics have already pointed out the lack of a feedback loop on evaluation results and question the quality and impartiality of the independent evaluations (ODA Watch, 2012). Although KOICA and ECDF are taking steps to improve external evaluation, many other ministries do not delegate evaluation to external auditors, which makes it very difficult to assess ODA procedures and processes. It has not been possible to obtain information on evaluation and auditing guidelines from other agencies and ministries with ODA activities. All of these show that internal procedures and processes are not coherent due to the fragmented nature of South Korean ODA across many ministries, agencies, and local governments, although certain actions are in place to streamline ECDF and KOICA procedures and processes (ODA Watch, 2012). Nevertheless, it can be argued that aid agencies are adapting evaluation and auditing procedures according to the requirements by the commanding ministries and agencies under which they operate.

The Stated Policies

The stated policies of South Korean environmental aid clearly reflect the changing political concerns of the government and society. In the past decades, environmental aid has moved from small projects providing aid based on comparative advantage based on South Korean development experience and domestic environmental concerns, such as yellow dust storms, to a more forward-looking approach that also takes into account future export markets and resource-rich locations. Being environmental is also defined as central to South Korea's global diplomatic ambitions and domestic economic priorities. The environment and climate change are major components of a Global Korea, highlighting the strategy of combining economic interest and political ambitions for international recognition as an environmental leader. Proposed at the G8 Summit in 2008, South Korea committed 200 million USD between 2008 and 2012 to the EACP (KOICA, 2012b). The stated goal of the EACP is to "successfully realize 'win-win' strategy that pursues both to deal with climate change and to continue economic development by researching a new sustainable economic paradigm and by creating 'East Asia Low Carbon Development path'" (KOICA, 2012a). The EACP has helped South Korea's Low Carbon Green Growth development model to establish a regional leadership position through environmental aid activities while disseminating Korean technology and expertise. The GGGI founded in 2009 by the president has become the spearhead initiative in advancing South Korea's national development strategy to the front stage of global environmental governance. Recently GGGI was recognized as an international organization, thus achieving global acknowledgement not only for the institution itself but also for South Korea's Green Growth development model.

The Practices and Particular Attitude That Underlie Them

Much the same as Japanese ODA, a high proportion of the South Korean ODA budget is concessional loans (e.g., 52% of Japan's gross bilateral ODA in 2012 and 42.5% of Korea's ODA in 2011), and this is explained and defended as a result of South Korea's own experience with high levels of foreign borrowing during its own development in the 1960s to 1980s (Watson, 2011; E. Kim & Oh, 2012; Kalinowski & Cho, 2012). It is argued that loans provide greater fiscal responsibility and motivate loan recipients to take ownership of their own development (S. Kim, 2011). Another aspect of South Korean ODA is that it tends to have a strong bias in favor of lower middle income countries (LMICs) rather than least developed countries (LDCs). This is a phenomenon that can be explained by stronger economic ties to LMICs (E. Kim & Oh, 2012) and a notion that South Korea's experience is more compatible with a certain stage of economic development (Smart, 2011). The significant emphasis that

South Korea puts on highlighting its own former status as a poor Third World country seeks to set the country apart from other OECD-DAC donors by highlighting the emotional and historical ties to the developing world. Yet the notion of being a particular development success also seeks to establish South Korea's development model as an empirical and universal model for other countries to follow. It establishes South Korea as the ultimate expert on development deriving from experience, supported by evidence that it worked in South Korea and other countries can replicate this success by following the recommendations of South Korea. In the environmental area, this has been expressed in the strong focus on specific areas where South Korea has expertise, such as reforestation, water management, and pollution management. However, the Green Growth paradigm, which was the center of South Korean domestic economic policy during the President Lee administration, became the central guiding light of environmental aid, and green aid is planned to make up 30% of total aid by 2020 (KOICA, 2011a). Noteworthy is that areas such as climate adaption, mitigation, and renewable energy are relatively new areas to South Korea, while earlier environmental projects were implemented in areas where South Korea did have long-term experience. At the time of writing, significant improvements of South Korean technology in these areas remain to be seen. The universal applicability of the South Korean development experience, with modifications, is a clear example of how environmental aid is guided by domestic economic and political concerns.

The Broader Impulse Behind Aid

South Korea's own experience as an aid-receiving Third World country is a major constitutive element in successive formulations of South Korean aid policy. First, there is a sense of pride of moving from aid recipient to a major aid donor, marking the success of the postwar development project (Watson, 2011). Second, aid has a moral component that emphasizes giving back to the global community that supported South Korean development and to transfer the development experience and model(s) (ECDF, 2008; S. Kim, 2011; KOICA, 2011a). Third, the country's rapid economic ascent from a third-world country is used to position South Korea apart from the rest of the DAC members, placing South Korea as a *bridge builder* between donor countries and recipient countries (KOICA, 2011a). Fourth, aid plays a significant role in strengthening economic ties to countries of relevance because of trade or resource interests. Finally, ODA policy formulation also increasingly mirrors a political wish to increase the status, recognition, and position of South Korea as a significant player in global politics. This element became particularly prevalent under the Roh Moo-Hun administration and has been further strengthened under Lee Myung-Bak, which is also reflected in the relatively higher increase of ODA budgets since the mid-2000s (Watson, 2011; E. Kim & Oh, 2012; Kalinowski & Cho, 2012).

These impulses may interact, conflict with, and complement each other in various ways. In the case of environmental aid, the heavy focus on disseminating the Green Growth paradigm combines the impulses in particular ways. The ability to establish Green Growth as an internationally recognized development paradigm has opened new opportunities both politically and economically. It has enhanced the status of the country in the eyes of the international community. This recognition in turn enables environmental aid to become a central aspect of strengthening economic and political ties to resource-rich developing countries. In the process, South Korea's own understanding of itself has also changed from that of a country catching up with the rich developed world to a country taking the lead on global governance issues. It appears that specifically within environmental aid, South Korea has found a domain in which all impulses become mutually constitutive.

Discussion

In this article, we attempted to analyze and compare Japanese and South Korean environmental aid using Williams's (2002) *aid as autobiography* approach. Our aim was to illuminate the contingent character of environmental aid of Japan and South Korea as the outcome of particular interpretations of their own development history and position in global politics. A comparison of Japanese and South Korean environmental aid was particularly useful to highlight the characteristics of South Korea, an emerging actor in the environmental aid sector, as well as in global environmental governance. Based on our analysis, we have found the following.

First, both Japanese and South Korean aid systems are under strong pressure to obtain and spend money, which is based on bureaucratic and institutional imperatives such as interagency competition over fund allocations and the procedures of fiscal allocations. Given South Korea's more fragmented structure, interagency competition appears to be fiercer, leading to competing programs and projects under various ministries and agencies. Both countries are sensitive to external criticism, particularly from the OECD-DAC, but they seek to deflect criticism by emphasizing their particular expertise and development experiences. The Japanese have a relatively longer history of giving aid and therefore a longer history of the involvement of the public. As a result, Japanese aid, including environmental aid, seems to reflect more the opinions of domestic business and the public. In the case of South Korea, environmental aid has primarily been guided by the vision of the president while the public and NGO sector have less influence on aid policy formulation.

Second, the internal procedures and processes are well reflected in Japanese and South Korean aid's auditing and evaluation procedures. Japan's auditing and evaluation procedures have led to confusion and frustration among recipients. In the case of South Korea, KOICA has implemented a set of evaluation

guidelines, but because aid is so fragmented between various ministries and agencies, an overarching evaluation and audit system still does not exist. The fragmentation means that different aid projects and programs may have different reporting requirements, which has also led to increased administrative burden on recipients, as they have to deal with multiple reporting requirements (ODA Watch, 2012).

Third, the stated policies of Japan and South Korea demonstrate the shifting political and economic concerns of the two countries. Both countries consider development aid as an important tool of their diplomacy, and in environmental aid, promoting their domestic environmental technologies and expertise abroad is considered an important mission, backed by their stories of domestic development success. Although the manner in which numerous actors are involved in aid policy formulation is similar in both countries, it is observed that much stronger power revolves around the president in South Korea. For instance, the Low Carbon, Green Growth concept was at first part of the campaign introduced by President Lee Myung-Bak to promote economic growth after the 2007 financial crisis. This concept was later well integrated into the National Strategy for Green Growth, Green New Deal, or the Global Korea Campaign, with his strong leadership and a top-down decision-making mechanism. This suggests that aid policy is very much determined by the type of vision the president has for the future of South Korea. As a result, changing international or domestic political concerns are much more vividly expressed in the case of South Korea. In fact, the government of South Korea changed after the presidential election in December 2012, and the new government officially announced the new vision of growth. The new vision “A New Era of Hope” by the newly elected president Park Geun-hye calls for a new direction of environmental policies, titled “Environmental Welfare State” (Ministry of Environment, 2013).

Lastly, the broader impulses behind the aid of Japan and South Korea are a combination of a moral obligation and domestic, international, political, and economic interests. What distinguishes them from other Western donors is that Japan and South Korea are using their past as developing countries or industrial latecomers as a principal reason for their particular approaches that may receive criticism from the Western donors. Japan considers itself as having a role to lead other developing countries because it can understand what it means to make self-help efforts, whereas South Korea positions itself as a bridge between so-called developed nations and developing countries both politically and emotionally. The rags-to-riches narrative is embedded in Japan’s self-help efforts philosophy and in South Korea’s “Korea model”. This belief in the applicability of particular interpretations of their own development experience is what underlies their aid practices and attitudes toward developing countries. Both Japan and South Korea clearly indicate not only that aid is based on altruism, but also that it is about mutual benefits, global recognition, and economic interests.

This does not necessarily make it less altruistic than Western donors but rather that the altruistic motive is not considered the only *acceptable* motivation for aid. In this regard, Japan and South Korea appear to rhetorically distance themselves from the so-called Western donors. Japan and South Korea tried to promote experience-based development models, yet these also tend to become universal claims about development. For both Japan and South Korea, environmental aid became the opportunity to play a significant role in the global aid community; for Japan, this occurred in the 1990s, and for South Korea, in the 2010s.

Conclusion

In this article we analyzed and compared Japanese and South Korean environmental aid to highlight the influence that both countries brought to the political dynamics of environmental aid, rather than to evaluate them. We sought to bring forth the way in which environmental aid has been shaped by Japan and South Korea's understanding of themselves in global politics, their development history, and domestic political and economic concerns. Using the framework of Williams (2002), which contends aid policy is rather a reflection of a donor country's self-image and that this can be seen through analysis of five specific areas, we examined various policies, government documents, and the information obtained through interviews. We highlighted five areas of Japanese and South Korean environmental aid: the bureaucratic and institutional imperatives, the internal procedures and processes, the stated policies, the practices and particular attitudes that underlie them, and the broader impulses behind aid. This article showed that both Japan and South Korea are promoting experience-based development models in environmental aid, and this gives them an opportunity to play a significant role in the global aid community. Furthermore, it shows how interinstitutional dynamics and internal bureaucratic processes shape aid policy formulation, and in the case of South Korea, how the president's vision for a global South Korea understood both in economic and political terms has affected environmental aid policy formulation. There are remaining aspects to be analyzed in the future. By using Williams's theory, we were able to outline trajectories of environmental aid policies in Japan and South Korea as historically contingent. Environmental aid policies reflected their understandings of their own development trajectories and position in the global order. Meanwhile, this study did not address a deeper analysis of their narratives, in other words, how these narratives were implemented as actual environmental aid projects or programs and how they further enforced or weaken their belief in the prescribed narrative. Tasks to study how Japanese and South Korean environmental aid was received in developing countries remain. Furthermore, in this article, we have limited our analysis to Japan and South Korea's bilateral environmental aid because of the importance that both governments place on bilateral aid. In the meantime, there are signs that both Japan and South Korea

recognize the significance of multilateral environmental aid. For example, a former official from the MoF of Japan became the new chief executive officer of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in 2012 (MoFA, 2012b), and the secretariat of the new Green Climate Fund will be established in South Korea (Yonhap, 2012). With new financial mechanisms becoming more prominent in aiding developing countries with environmental issues and climate change issues, we look forward to giving attention to this aspect of Japanese and South Korean environmental aid in the future.

Authors' Note

This article is based on a working paper from the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), titled “Japanese and South Korean Environmental Aid: What Are Their Life Stories?” Part of this study was conducted under the research project “Development Strategies of Nordic and Asian Countries—Understanding Cultural Relations” at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, partially funded by the Scandinavia-Japan Sasakawa Foundation (No. 12–8).

Acknowledgments

The authors acknowledge the cooperation of the officials of the Japanese and South Korean governments and thank the anonymous reviewers.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: Scandinavia-Japan Sasakawa Foundation No. 12–8.

Notes

1. More specifically, OECD-DAC defines ODA as “those flows to countries and territories on the DAC List of ODA Recipients and to multilateral institutions which are: i) provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies; and ii) each transaction of which: a) is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective; and b) is concessional in character and conveys a grant element of at least 25 per cent (calculated at a rate of discount of 10 per cent)” (OECD-DAC, 2013a).
2. Except for a few hikes in 2000 and 2005. Meanwhile, Japan has made use of its annual supplementary budget to achieve temporary increased in its development aid budget (OECD, 2010). Although this approach is criticized that it makes aid flows unpredictable and complicates planning, it should be noted that the actual aid volume has not shrunk dramatically.

3. The Japanese government started to pay attention to the concept human security from the late 1990s, largely due to an influential Japanese diplomat, Sadako Ogata, who was then the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Fukushima, 2007). In 1998, the late prime minister Obuchi announced that a Trust Fund for Human Security would be established in the United Nations. The government of Japan then founded the Trust Fund for Human Security in 1999, with an initial contribution of about 5,000 million JPY. By 2009, total contributions amounted to some 39 billion JPY, making the Trust Fund, one of the largest of its kind established in the United Nations (MoFA, 2009).
4. The Japanese government defines environmental aid following the definition of DAC_CRS statistics (MoFA, 2012a). OECD-DAC (2013b) defines environmental aid as “aid targeting environmental sustainability,” which includes activities that specifically aim at improving the environment (e.g., biodiversity conservation, biosphere protection, environmental policy, and planning), and others that are environment-oriented activities, such as infrastructure projects designed with integrated environmental protection components, water resources protection, or sustainable forest management programs. The authors acknowledge the work of Hicks et al. (2008), which redefined and reconsidered the content of effective environmental aid; however, in this article, we will conduct our analysis based on both governments’ definitions of environmental aid as the authors are interested in their own narratives about aid.
5. Interview with a government official, February 2012.
6. Interview with a researcher at the JICA Research Institute, February 2012.
7. Interview with a ministry official, February 2012.
8. KOICA administers approximately 80% of total grant aid while ECDF, operated by the Export-Import Bank of Korea (KEXIM), provides concessional loans to developing countries. Approximately 20% of grant aid is administered by other ministries and agencies and thus is not under the control of KOICA.
9. The national Green Growth strategy has received widespread international recognition, but domestic criticism has been fierce. Controversial elements of the plan such as the CO₂ emissions targets, the expansion of nuclear power, overseas resource diplomacy, and the controversial Four River Restoration projects are central elements of the strategy and also the elements under heavy criticism for their limited or potentially damaging impact (Green Korea United, 2010a, 2010b; Yun, 2010; Yun, Cho, & Hippel, 2011).
10. Interview with KOICA official, September 17, 2012.
11. This lack of access to information is not an issue particular to ODA. Civil society groups and the government tend to have adversarial relationships and the government often limits access on the grounds of national security and confidentiality, which also shelters the government and agencies from civil society scrutiny and criticism.

References

- Alesina, A., & Dollar, D. (2000). Who gives foreign aid to whom and why? *Journal of Economic Growth*, 5(1), 33–63.

- Berthélemy, J.-C. (2006). Bilateral donors' interest vs. recipients' development motives in aid allocation: Do all donors behave the same? *Review of Development Economics*, 10(2), 179–194.
- Bourguignon, F., & Sundberg, M. (2007). Aid effectiveness: Opening the black box. *The American Economic Review*, 97(2), 316–321. doi:10.2307/30034468
- Cassen, R. (1994). *Does aid work?: Report to an intergovernmental task force*. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press.
- Doucoulagos, H., & Paldam, M. (2009). The aid effectiveness literature: The sad results of 40 years of research. *Journal of Economic Surveys*, 23(3), 433–461. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6419.2008.00568.x
- Dudley, L., & Montmarquette, C. (1976). A model of the supply of bilateral foreign aid. *The American Economic Review*, 66(1), 132–142.
- Easterly, W. (2006). *The white man's burden: Why the West's efforts to aid the rest have done so much ill and so little good*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Economic Development Cooperation Fund. (2008). *ECDF: Your development partner*. Seoul, South Korea: Author.
- Economic Development Cooperation Fund. (2009). *ECDF annual report 2009*. Gwacheon, South Korea: Author.
- Economic Development Cooperation Fund. (2011). *ECDF annual report 2011*. Gwacheon, South Korea: Author.
- Fukushima, A. (2007). いま新たに『人間の安全保障』を考える [Rethinking “human security” now]. *Keio Law Journal*, 8(200710), 1–74.
- Global Green Growth Institute. (2012). About GGGI. Retrieved from <http://www.gggi.org/about/overview>
- Gomez, O. A. (2008). The evolution of official lessons: The Japanese experience of the “Big Four” pollution diseases through the lens of international aid. *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences*, 1(1), 81–100.
- Green Korea United. (2010a). Green growth policy of the Korean government and its critics. Retrieved from <http://green-korea.tistory.com/101>
- Green Korea United. (2010b). Wrong solution for climate change by the UNEP and president Lee Myeong-bak. Retrieved from <http://green-korea.tistory.com/102>
- Hall, D. (2010). Japanese lessons and transitional forces: ODA and the environment. In D. Leheny & K. Warren (Eds.), *Japanese aid and the construction of global development: Inescapable solutions* (pp. 167–186). Oxon, England: Routledge.
- Hicks, R. L., Parks, B. C., Roberts, J. T., & Tierney, M. J. (2008). *Greening aid?: Understanding the environmental impact of development assistance*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Hirata, K. (2002). *Civil society in Japan: The growing role of NGOs in Tokyo's aid and development policy*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Japan Bank of International Cooperation. (2003). 海外経済協力基金史 [History of overseas economic cooperation fund]. Tokyo, Japan: Author.
- Jempa, C. J. (1991). *The tying of aid*. Paris, France: OECD Development Centre.
- Japan Bank of International Cooperation. (2004). *Purojekuto hyoka no tebiki* [Guide to project evaluation]. Tokyo, Japan: Author.
- Johnson, C. (1982). *MITI and the Japanese miracle: The growth of industrial policy, 1925–1975*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

- Kadono, N., & Takizawa, H. (2008). *Yosan ha naze bocho suruka, dou yokusei suruka: kanryo no insentibu no shiten kara* [Why does budget expand, how to control: From the perspective of bureaucrats' incentives (RIETI Discussion Paper Series 04-J-008). Tokyo, Japan: Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry.
- Kagawa-Fox, M. (2012). *The ethics of Japan's global environmental policy: The conflict between principles and practice*. Abingdon, England: Routledge.
- Kalinowski, T., & Cho, H. (2012). Korea's search for a global role between hard economic interests and soft power. *European Journal of Development Research*, 24(2), 242–260. doi:10.1057/ejdr.2012.7
- Kang, S. J., & Park, B. (2011). Does Korea follow Japan in foreign aid? Relationships between aid and foreign investment. *Japan and the World Economy*, 23, 19–27.
- Kim, E. M., & Oh, J. (2012). Determinants of foreign aid: The case of South Korea. *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 12, 251–273.
- Kim, S. (2011). Bridging troubled worlds? An analysis of the ethical case for South Korean aid. *Journal of International Development*, 23, 802–822. doi:10.1002/jid.1811
- Korea International Cooperation Agency. (2002). *KOICA annual report 2001*. Seongnam, South Korea: Author.
- Korea International Cooperation Agency. (2003). *KOICA annual report 2002*. Seongnam, South Korea: Author.
- Korea International Cooperation Agency. (2004). *KOICA annual report 2003*. Seongnam, South Korea: Author.
- Korea International Cooperation Agency. (2006). *KOICA annual report 2005*. Seongnam, South Korea: Author.
- Korea International Cooperation Agency. (2007). *KOICA annual report 2006*. Seongnam, South Korea: Author.
- Korea International Cooperation Agency. (2009). *KOICA annual report 2008*. Seongnam, South Korea: Author.
- Korea International Cooperation Agency. (2011a). *20 years of KOICA*. Seongnam, South Korea: Author.
- Korea International Cooperation Agency. (2011b). *KOICA annual report 2010*. Seongnam, South Korea: Author.
- Korea International Cooperation Agency. (2012a). *EACP website*. Retrieved from <http://eacp.koica.go.kr/summary/01.jsp>
- Korea International Cooperation Agency. (2012b). *Korea international cooperation agency annual report 2011*. Seongnam, South Korea: Author.
- Korea Economic Institute. (2011). *Korea's economy 2011* (Vol. 27). Washington, DC: Author.
- Lancaster, C. (2010). Japan's ODA: Naiatsu and gaiatsu. In D. Leheny & K. Warren (Eds.), *Japanese aid and the construction of global development: Inescapable solutions* (pp. 29–53). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lumsgaine, D. H. (1993). *Moral vision in international politics: The foreign aid regime, 1949–1989*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Lundborg, P. (1998). Foreign aid and international support as a gift exchange. *Economics & Politics*, 10(2), 127–142.
- Maizels, A., & Nissanke, M. K. (1984). Motivations for aid to developing countries. *World Development*, 12(9), 879–900.

- Ministry of Environment. (2011). What is environmental cooperation. Retrieved from <http://www.env.go.jp/earth/coop/coop/english/environmental/what.html>
- Ministry of Environment. (2013). *Environmental welfare state in a new era of hope -18th environment day-*. Retrieved from <http://www.korea.net/Government/Briefing-Room/Press-Releases/view?articleId=2248>
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2012). *ODA/development cooperation*. Retrieved from Ministry Website: http://www.mofat.go.kr/ENG/policy/oda/index.jsp?menu=m_20_110
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (1997). *Japan's ODA annual report (Summary) 1997*. Tokyo, Japan: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/summary/1997/index.html>
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2002). 政府開発援助 (ODA) 白書 2002 [Overseas development aid white paper 2002]. Tokyo, Japan: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2003). *Review of Japan's official development assistance charter (Provisional translation)*. Tokyo, Japan: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/reform/review0303.html>
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2009). *The trust fund for human security: For the "human-centered" 21st century*. Retrieved from http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/human_security/fund21.pdf
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2012a). *Japan's ODA white paper 2012*. Tokyo, Japan: Author.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2012b). 地球環境ブアジリデイ(GEF) 次期事務局長(CEO)の選出について [Regarding the election of the next CEO of the GEF]. Retrieved from http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/danwa/24/dgk_0608.html
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2013). 日本は世界の国にどんな援助をしているの? [What kind of aid does Japan give to the countries in the world?]. Retrieved from http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/kids/q_a/enjyo.html
- Mori, A. (2009). *Kankyo Enjo Ron: Zizokukuano na hatten mokuhyo jitsugen no ronri, senryaku, hyoka* [Theories of environmental aid: Logic, strategy and evaluation to achieve goals of sustainable development]. Tokyo, Japan: Yuhikaku.
- ODA Watch. (2012). *Parallel report on Korea's international development cooperation*. Seoul, South Korea: Author.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (1991). *The DAC principles for the evaluation of development assistance*. Paris, France: Author.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2008). *The Paris declaration on aid effectiveness and the Accra agenda for action*. Paris, France: Author.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2010). *DAC peer review of Japan*. Paris, France: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/45/52/45470028.pdf>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2012a). *Development co-operation report 2012: Lessons in linking sustainability and development*. Paris, France: Author.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2012b). *Donor profile: Korea*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dac/korea.htm>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2013a). *The 0.7% ODA/GNI target – A history*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/the07odagntarget-ahistory.htm>

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2013b). *Aid statistics*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2013c). *Country programmable aid: Korea*. Retrieved from http://webnet.oecd.org/dcdgraphs/CPA_donor/
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee. (2008). *Development cooperation of the Republic of Korea*. Paris, France: OECD.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee. (2011). *Busan partnership for effective development co-operation*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/49650173.pdf>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee. (2013a). *Official development assistance – Definition and coverage*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/officialdevelopmentassistance/definitionandcoverage.htm>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee. (2013b). *Technical guide to terms and data in the Creditor Reporting System (CRS) Aid Activities database*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/crsguide.htm>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee. (2013c). *Untying aid: The right to choose*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dac/untiedaid>
- Okano-Hajmans, M. (2012). Japan's "green" economic diplomacy: Environmental and energy technology and foreign relations. *The Pacific Review*, 25(3), 339–364.
- Pearson, L. B. (1989). *Partners in development: Report of the commission on international development*. New York, NY: Praeger.
- Pedersen, K. R. (2001). The Samaritan's dilemma and the effectiveness of development aid. *International Tax and Public Finance*, 8(5–6), 693–703.
- Potter, D. (1994). Assessing Japan's environmental aid policy. *Pacific Affairs*, 67(2), 200–215.
- Potter, D. M. (2012). Japan's official development assistance. In H.-S. Kim & D. M. Potter (Eds.), *Foreign aid competition in Northeast Asia* (pp. 13–35). Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press.
- Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, The Constitution of Japan. Accessed 25 October 2013 at http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html
- Rix, A. (1993). *Japan's foreign aid challenge: Policy reform and aid leadership*. London, England: Routledge.
- Sato, J. (2013). Domestic functions of economic cooperation: Japan's evolution as a donor in the 1950s. In J. Sato & Y. Shimomura (Eds.), *The rise of Asian donors: Japan's impact on the evolution of emerging donors* (pp. 11–28). Oxon, England: Routledge.
- Sawamura, N. (2004). Japan's philosophy of self-help efforts in international development cooperation: Does it work in Africa? *Journal of International Cooperation in Education*, 7(1), 27–40.
- Smart, C. B. (2011). The economic of (Country) choice: South Korea and aid selectivity. *PEAR*, 3, 99–114.

- Sunaga, K. (2004). *The reshaping of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) charter* (FASID Discussion Paper on Development Assistance, 3). Tokyo, Japan: FASID.
- Tonami, A., & Mori, A. (2007). Sustainable development in Thailand: Lessons from implementing Local Agenda 21 in three cities. *The Journal of Environment & Development*, 2007(16), 269–289. doi:10.1177/1070496507306223
- United Nations Environment Programme. (2010). *Overview of the Republic of Korea's national strategy for green growth strategy*. Geneva, Switzerland: Author.
- Wajjwalku, S., & Tasarika, E. (2008). Thailand: What makes recipient ownership?: A comparative study of Japanese and Danish aid to environmental conservation. In A. M. Jerve, Y. Shimomura & A. S. Hansen (Eds.), *Aid relationships in Asia: Exploring ownership in Japanese and Nordic aid* (pp. 209–223). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Watson, I. (2011). Global Korea: Foreign aid and national interests in an age of globalization. *Contemporary Politics*, 17(1), 53–69. doi:10.1080/13569775.2011.552688
- Williams, D. (2002). Aid as autobiography. *Africa*, 72(1), 150–163.
- Yonhap. (2012). *Seoul welcomes decision on GCF secretariat's location in Korea*. Retrieved from http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2013/07/120_122722.html
- Yun, S.-J. (2010). Not so green: A critique of South Korea's growth strategy. *Global Asia*, 5(2), 70–74.
- Yun, S.-J., Cho, M.-R., & Hippel, D. V. (2011). The current status of green growth in Korea: Energy and urban security. *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 9(44), 1–15.
- Zimmerman, R. A. (2007). *The determinants of foreign aid: An inquiry into the consequences of welfare state institutions and public opinion*. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: University of Amsterdam Political Science Department.

Author Biographies

Aki Tonami is a researcher at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), University of Copenhagen. She has a PhD in environmental studies (ecological economics) from Kyoto University (2008). Her main research areas include Japan's international relations and environmental governance, particularly environmental aid.

Anders Riel Müller is a PhD candidate with the Danish Institute for International Studies and the Department of Society and Globalization, Roskilde University. His main research areas are South Korea resource diplomacy, food security, and agricultural modernization.